

# From the Mailbox

Editor, Press-Herald:  
It is a fact today that teachers can be and are certificated to teach in the public schools of California with the Standard Teaching Credential without a single course in the teaching of reading. Reading is one of the areas that may be chosen as an elective by a pre-professional preparing to become a teacher; but it is not a required course. When one considers that success in all other subjects depends upon the quality of the student's reading ability, it looms as the most important subject. If one had to choose only one subject for a school, it would have to be reading. Few beginning teachers trained for the new stand-

ard teaching credential have more than one three-hour course in this all-important subject. So they practice it in their first teaching assignment. To teach the new teacher how to teach reading requires extensive in-service training. Large classes force remedial reading measures to compensate for the time a child does not get from a busy teacher. Every teacher really needs to know something about the teaching of reading, and all primary and elementary school teachers really should be experts in this area because there are reading problems at all levels. It is hard to reconcile this official non-attention to the basic subject with

all the hubbub about improving education in California. \* \* \* While the state board is commendably busy attempting to eliminate some of the non-essential prescriptive courses from the School Code and state board requirements, it should give a little thought to this most important of fundamentals. In its anxiety to place the state board has forgotten the importance of the basic subject of the entire curriculum. Reading is a very complicated process. The converting of sounds to printed symbols is the heart of it. There are only 26 letters but over 40 sounds in the English language. Eighty-

five per cent of our words are phonetic; however, the remaining 15 per cent, which are non-phonetic, constitute 75 per cent of the words in most common use, according to linguistic authorities. This creates some very serious instructional problems when children do not take to reading naturally. Under the pressures they meet at every turn their emotional state makes it difficult to teach reading to children in large classes. People who are concerned with this problem should let the State Board of Education know about it. If we are going to insure that we have teachers properly trained in the techniques of teaching reading, it should have official attention. With the professional units required and everyone trying to get an ear in for this subject mat-

ter area, schools of education have a hard time squeezing in adequate emphasis on reading. This concerns parents who have a child with a reading problem should be made known to state officials, who seem to be administering education these days down to the last detail. We at least ought to teach everyone to read his native language before we get excited about teaching him a foreign language or even math or science. \* \* \* From these non-readers come our discipline problems, our school failures, our drop-outs, and our unemployed and less employable citizens. It is a serious problem, one which should not be swept under the rug for the sake of subjects someone thinks are more important. Asking a slow

reader to read "Beowulf" is no answer to the reading problem. How long must California suffer from the theory now in vogue "That all that is needed to teach a subject is mastery of the subject by the teacher." Any good teacher knows that there is as much difference as day and night between knowing a subject or a skill and knowing how to teach it. Can't we have both knowledge of the subject and skill in teaching it in every teacher. With our excellent building program and our most outstanding state school building loan program, we now have ways of meeting the problem of a seat for every child. We still have some ground to cover in making the use of that seat effective, particularly when it is occupied by a

## Cheerleaders Spark Spirit At Montgomery High School

By TOD GULICK  
Montgomery High School  
Sparking enthusiasm and spirit during this year's athletic contests are Bishop Montgomery High's six cheerleaders.  
Under the direction of head cheerleaders Tom Ericson and Judy O'Hara, both seniors at Montgomery, are seniors Pete Peyton and Nancy McCall, and juniors Terese Ryan and Sandy Holtz. This lively group will lead the on-reader or a retarded reader with normal intelligence.  
Yours very truly,  
DR. J. H. HULL

Bishop Montgomery student body in encouragement and support of teams throughout the year.  
Cheerleading at Montgomery requires more than spirit and a bleacher-rattling voice. Cheerleaders must hold at least a "C" average in school subjects and at least a "B" in conduct. Approval of their dean and teachers also is necessary.  
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